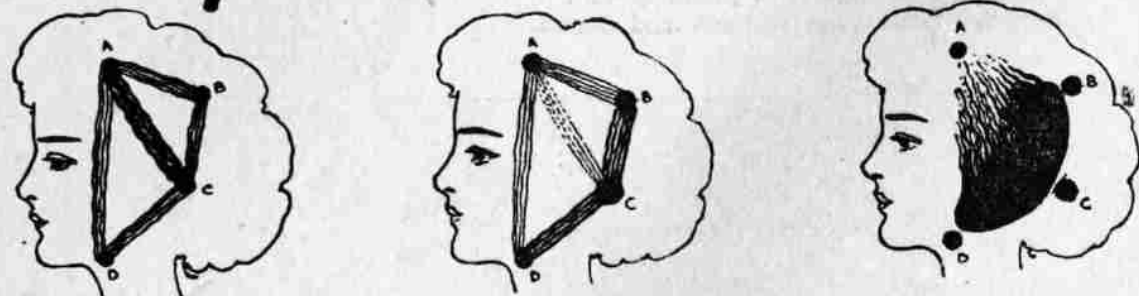


# Why Great Prima Donnas are so Unreasonable



A, the higher conscious centers; B the centre of emotions; C the centre of voice control. The lines show the nerve connections between these three. The first head is of a normal person. The full control of emotions is shown by the heavy lines between A and C. The second head is that of a prima donna. The nerve fibers are strong between B, C and D, but the control between A and C is weak. The third head illustrates the flow of blood to the emotional centres of the prima donna which robs the higher conscious controlling centres of strength.

**W**HY are prima donnas unreasonable, capricious, violent, often ungrateful—as well as generally delightful?

Because, says science, they have enormously developed sensory centres in their brains, while their higher inhibitory moral centres have been switched off.

Nearly all the great "temperamental geniuses" of history have exhibited the same peculiarities.

Professor David Edgar Rice, Ph. D. (Columbia University), formerly of Columbia's department of psychology, has explained the underlying reasons in a profound and scientific manner.

The truth, very simply and unscientifically stated, seems to be that the prima donna and the "temperamental genius" have a very large blood supply, and very large brain centres, in a certain locality of the brain, and that the higher moral and intellectual centres of the brain are comparatively neglected.

It can hardly be called the prima donna's fault. She has been gifted by nature with an enormous centre of vocal expression in her brain, which uses up so much blood and nervous energy that her moral and intellectual centres do not have half a chance.

Remember that, according to Professor Rice, there are "temperamental geniuses" and "intellectual geniuses." Herbert Spencer was an "intellectual genius," and was not expected to do anything unreasonable. Richard Wagner was a "temperamental genius," and he was expected to throw a wine bottle at his host or do something at least as startling as that once a day. And prima donnas share the peculiarities of "temperamental geniuses."

First, let us satisfy ourselves that prima donnas are unreasonable, and then let us go more deeply into the science that shows why they are unreasonable.

Oscar Hammerstein discovered a beautiful young American singer named Felice Lyne. She became famous in a single night after she sang Gilda in "Rigoletto" at Hammerstein's London Opera House. She is only twenty years old.

The King and Queen went to hear Felice Lyne, and the Queen told her that she had "a perfectly lovely voice." Every honor fell to her largely as a result of the discriminating enterprise of Oscar Hammerstein.

A few weeks ago the impresario advertised Madame Berthe Cesar, the noted French prima donna, as Marguerite in "Faust," a role in which Miss Lyne had been singing. Miss Lyne felt aggrieved at Mr. Hammerstein, and at the next rehearsal, when she met him, she beat him over the head with the heavy score of the work which had made her famous, thereby causing him "great bodily pain and mental anguish," as the lawyers would express it.

Another illustration of the prima donna temperament was furnished the other day by Miss Fritzi Scheff. This sprightly young person was travelling in a special car on the Union Pacific Railroad. In the morn-

ing she took a private bath in her private bath tub. The movement of the train caused the tub to joggle in an unpleasant manner and made the water slop over. So the prima donna quickly pulled the alarm cord—that is provided for murders and similar emergencies—and brought the train to a standstill.

"What is the matter?" asked the conductor. Miss Scheff explained vivaciously. The train stopped until she had finished her bath.

Miss Mary Garden always explains things interestingly, and she has thrown a lot of light on prima donnas' morality and psychology. A wealthy but simple-minded woman, Mrs. David Mayer, of Chicago, complained that she had advanced the money for Mary Garden's musical education, and that after Miss Garden became famous she snubbed her benefactress.

"Have I snubbed the Mayers?" observed Miss Garden. "Really, I don't know whether I did or not. I was very young when they first became interested in me. I was not interested in them so much as I was in making a name for myself. They were merely the means to an end."

Hundreds of other cases might be cited. The most admired prima donnas and actresses have shown themselves unreasonable, capricious and erratic, but no one admires them a bit the less afterward.

Sir James Crichton Browne, a famous English physician, made an address recently to the Child Study Society at the University of London on the difference between men's and women's brains. His remarks incidentally explained some of the peculiarities of prima donnas.

"In woman," he said, "the posterior region of the brain receives a richer flow of arterial blood; in man the anterior region. The work of the two regions of the brain is different. The posterior region is mainly sensory and concerned with seeing and hearing. The anterior region includes the higher inhibitory centres

which are concerned with the will, and the association centres, concerned with the appetites and desires based on internal sensations.

"There is a correspondence between the richer blood supply of the posterior region of the brain in women, and their delicate powers of sensuous perception, rapidity of thought and emotional sensibility, and between the richer blood supply of the anterior region in men and their greater originality on the higher levels of intellectual work, their calmer judgment and stronger will."

"The crown of the woman's skull is flatter than the man's, but the back of her brain is relatively larger than his."

Now investigation shows that the temperamental genius usually possesses a brain that is highly developed at the back, i. e., in the region where the woman's brain also is relatively most developed. In a musician, a poet or an artist the centres of hearing, seeing and language are most highly developed, and these, as we have seen, are in the back of the brain.

Now, the prima donna is an artist and considerably more of a woman than the average woman, so that the phenomena which are constantly going on in the posterior part of her brain must be simply amazing, and an excuse for any sort of does.

Professor Rice agrees with Sir James Crichton Browne concerning the distinction between the sensory and higher inhibitory areas of the brain. He points out that the tendency of science is to localize, more and more, various mental faculties in certain groups of nerve cells.

"It has been found that the language centre is split up and specialized in a most extraordinary manner," said Professor Rice. "A man, for instance, may know English and French and Greek. Then he may suffer an injury to his brain, and he will be found to have lost his knowledge of English, but to have retained his knowledge of French and Greek. In fact any one or two languages of the group may be cut

## Because, Science Tells Us, the Expression Centres in Their Brains Take Up All the Blood Supply, and the Poor Little Higher, Inhibitory Centres Are Starved

connected with tiny threads. When the expression centres are working vigorously these little dots can hardly get in a suggestion sideways. Now, a commonplace respectable person would have good-sized moral inhibitory centres hitched together like a well-conducted electric circuit.

"Much of our knowledge of the localization of brain functions comes through the surgical treatment of brain diseases. If a patient is found to be suffering from paralysis of cer-

"The first time that Alfieri heard music he experienced, as it were, a dazzling in his eyes and ears. He passed several days in a strange but agreeable melancholy. Berlioz has described his emotions on hearing beautiful music: First, a sensation of voluptuous ecstasy, immediately followed by general agitation with palpitation, oppression, sobbing,

without regard to the feelings or the rights of others.

The list of capricious modern actresses proves the same tendency. Ellen Terry made her reputation in the company headed by Sir Henry Irving, and abandoned him in his old age when he was beginning to lose some of the prosperity he had formerly enjoyed.

Everybody knows that Sarah Bernhardt is apt to reflect the worst of her remarkable mind by making inkpots at her associates' other acts of violence. Inhibitory centres have no work to do.

Mrs. Brown Potter became an actor of remarkable ability. Some time later she left him, lost reputation and drawing power. His last years, it is said, were bittered by her action.

The temperament of the prima short is a compound of sensibilities without adequate sensory control. The prima donnas the actress share this temperament with more or less of the



Miss Felice Lyne Achieved World-Wide Fame as a Prima Donna at the Age of Twenty Through the Efforts of Oscar Hammerstein. Just Because He Had Engaged Another Prima Donna Without Injuring Her Position, Miss Lyne Slapped Mr. Hammerstein in the Face with a Lot of Music.

tain facial muscles, the surgeon knows exactly where to locate the tumor that is causing the trouble. If it is a case of one-sided paralysis, he knows precisely what artery in the brain has been injured.

"As a result of these investigations it has been found that certain parts of the brain are the seat of the impulses which man shares with the lower animals, while certain other areas are the centre of the so-called higher processes which control or inhibit the purely animal impulses."

"We often see a shifting of mental control from the higher to the lower senses in a good man who suddenly goes wrong. Stevenson depicted one form of this shifting in his 'Strange case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.' We see it also in the case of intelligent, agreeable men who succumb to the effects of alcohol, cocaine or opium."

"In the case of the prima donnas the over-development of their special senses checks the operation of the higher inhibitory processes, which are, perhaps, naturally weak. All control is removed, and the wild animal in her, though a beautiful and artistic one rages without restraint."

"Lombroso mentions greatly heightened sensibility as the most prominent characteristic of many of the individuals whom he regards as geniuses. He says: 'If we seek the differences which separate a man of genius from an ordinary man, we find that they consist in very great part in an exquisite, and sometimes perverted, sensibility.'"

trembling, sometimes terminating with a kind of fainting fit.

"Mallibran, on first hearing Beethoven's symphony in C minor, had a convulsive attack, and had to be taken out of the hall."

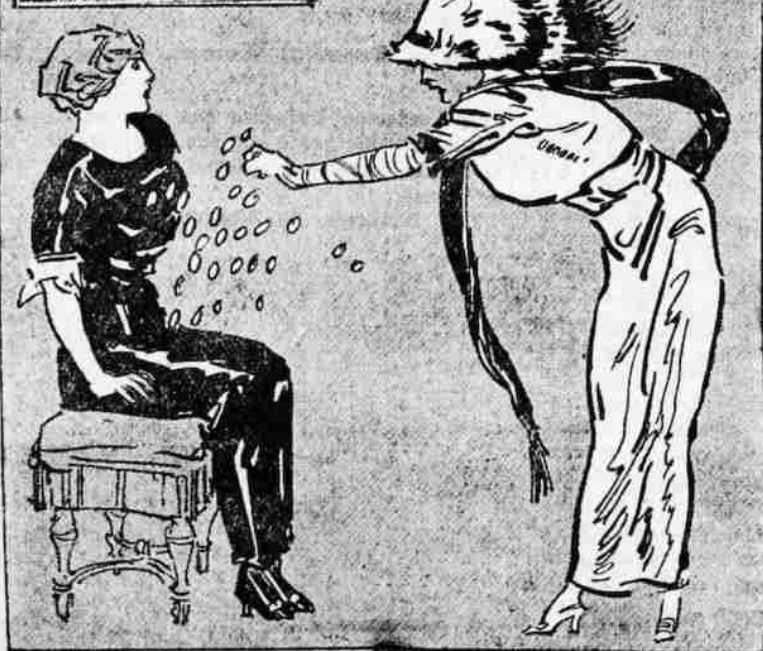
"Musset, Goncourt, Flaubert, Carlyle had so delicate a perception of sounds that the noises of the streets and bells were insupportable to them."

"Urquiza faltered on breathing the odor of a rose. Byron had a convulsive attack on seeing Keats act. The painter Francia died of joy on seeing one of Raphael's pictures."

We shall find Professor Rice's scientific facts and theories extensively confirmed by the lives of the most famous musicians and actors. Most of the great musicians were "supermen," according to the philosophy of Nietzsche. They were above morality. It is said that only one great musician was thoroughly moral. That was Beethoven. He had such a great, well-developed brain that his inhibitory centres were able to overcome his artistic eccentricities, but there was a terrific struggle between the two.

Beethoven abandoned the courtship of a beautiful young girl, who loved him, simply because he was deaf and middle-aged, and felt that he should not tie her life to his. But he is an amazing exception among geniuses.

Richard Wagner stole the wife of his most devoted admirer. Franz Liszt was no better. There are comparatively only a few great musicians and singers who have not gratified their sensory impulses



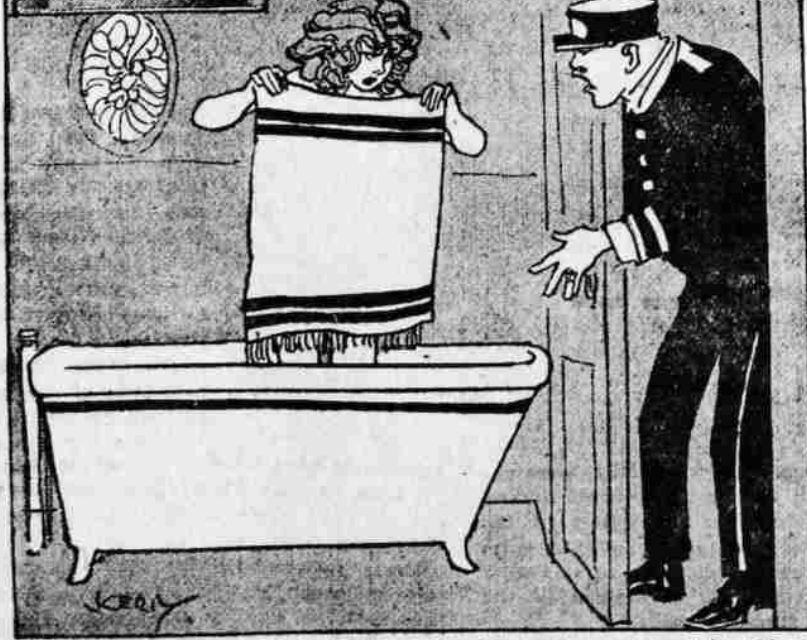
Miss Mary Garden, Who Snubbed Mrs. David Mayer, Who Had Paid for Her Musical Education. "I Was Not Interested in Them When They Were Helping Me," Said Miss Garden, "but Only in My Own Career. I Paid Them Back Because I Would Consider It a Discredit to Owe Money to Such People."

out and leave the others in good order.

"Language seems to be the centre most concerned in the prima donnas and other artists we are discussing."

"It must be obvious to anybody that if there is an enormous development in one region of the brain, another is likely to be neglected. The organism possesses only a certain vitality, and if one part is abnormally developed another is correspondingly undeveloped."

"Doubtless there are large ganglia around the expression area in the prima donna's brain, connected up with large white fibres. On the other hand, her moral inhibitory centres are just little pinhead dots



Miss Fritzi Scheff, Who Pulled the Emergency Cord So That the Train Would Stop and Not Make the Water Slop Over While She Was Bathing.

Miss Felice Lyne, the Youngest Prima Donna on the Stage